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REGIONAL APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL SECURITY

Working paper submitted by Cuba

1. The programme of work which the Disarmament Commission approved at its 1991 session included the item: "Regional approach to disarmament within the context of global security". For the consideration of that item, the Commission decided to establish Working Group III, which was open to the participation of all interested States.

2. The substantive debate on this item and the proposals and papers submitted by various States clearly indicate that the item has generated considerable interest among delegations and therefore that its inclusion in the Commission's agenda was appropriate and also timely. In the course of the debate, specific aspects of the item were identified and discussed and potential areas of common interest were explored, and these were clearly described in the report that Working Group III submitted for consideration by the Disarmament Commission at the end of its 1991 session. 1/

3. At the current session of the Commission, a further substantive and detailed debate on the item is to be held with the aim of finding common ground in relation to the various aspects of the question which are described in the papers submitted by Member States which have been circulated by the Secretariat.

4. In order to facilitate their consideration, Cuba's ideas, proposals and observations regarding this item of the Commission's programme of work are described below in as clear and detailed a manner as possible.

5. With regard to the structure of the Chairman's paper, which appears in the report on the work of Working Group III (annex III to the Commission's

report), Cuba believes that it can serve as a basis for future discussions on this question. However, the title of topic I (ibid., para. 6) should be reviewed and should be made simpler and more concise. A variant which could serve as a basis for negotiations on this subject is the following: "Relationship between regional and global approaches to disarmament".

6. In addition to the questions already included in topic I, Cuba believes that the following ideas should be reflected:

(a) Any negotiating process for disarmament or arms limitation and reduction at the regional level must take into account the progress and difficulties of that process at the global level because of the close interrelationship between the two.

(b) The achievements at the regional level in the adoption of agreements on disarmament and arms limitation or reduction, along with those at the bilateral and global levels, should make it possible to progress towards the attainment of the fundamental objective in this sphere, namely, general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

7. With regard to the proposals included under topic II, Principles and guidelines, Cuba believes that the following points should be taken into account:

(a) In the first line of the fifth paragraph, the words "and the reduction and elimination of tension" should be added after "regional conflicts".

(b) The following sentence should be added at the end of the sixth paragraph: "i.e., those which make it possible for surprise attacks to be launched and large-scale offensive operations to be carried out within the territory of other States".

(c) The seventeenth paragraph should be replaced by the following: "Disarmament and arms limitation or reduction agreements which are adopted at the regional level must be respected by all extra-regional countries, in particular by nuclear powers and other militarily significant States. Such States must refrain from taking measures which directly or indirectly block the attainment of the objectives proposed in those agreements, or impede their implementation, particularly if they are outside the region". Further to the comments made above on the proposals already included in the Commission's report, Cuba believes that the following questions should be included in the final version of the document adopted by the Working Group:

I. Regional disarmament efforts should ultimately make it possible to attain the objective of general and complete disarmament through the adoption of a range of measures which may cover a limited geographical area and be partial in scope.

II. High priority must be given to the adoption of disarmament and arms limitation or reduction measures in the regions in which there are large concentrations of weapons, or conflicts and tension which may lead to military confrontation between one or more of the States in the region, or between those States and other States with interests in the area.

III. In any negotiating process for disarmament and arms limitation or reduction at the regional level, and also at the global level, priority must be given to those weapons which are clearly offensive or destabilizing in nature, or which can be used to launch large-scale offensive operations within the territory of the adversary, or rapid or surprise attacks, with the aim of total destruction.

IV. Agreements on disarmament and on arms limitation or reduction must be adopted on the basis of the formal commitment of all the States parties to fulfil in good faith the obligations assumed under those agreements.

V. In order to implement practical measures designed to increase regional security, it is necessary to identify the elements which are the main source of instability or tension and constitute a threat to the peace and security of the region.

VI. Agreements on disarmament and on arms limitation or reduction and the adoption of other regional or global measures must respect the right of each State to choose freely the political and security system that best reflects the interests and wishes of its population.

8. With regard to topic III, "Ways and means", Cuba believes that the following points should be taken into account:

Confidence- and security-building measures

(a) The second paragraph should consist of the first sentence only.

(b) The third paragraph should be redrafted, since it is not necessary to verify all the confidence-building measures that are adopted. An alternative could be the following: "During the negotiations on confidence-building measures, the need for and feasibility of verifying the implementation of some of these measures at the regional level should be fully analysed and assessed".

In addition to the proposals already included under this topic, Cuba considers that the following ideas should be added:

I. Confidence-building measures must be adopted in other spheres at the regional level, particularly in the economic sphere, in order to promote mutual trust, mutually beneficial relations among States and

interdependence between them and thereby strengthen security in the region.

II. The adoption of a defensive military doctrine and structuring of the armed forces in a predominantly defensive manner, and the implementation of the principle of reasonable sufficiency for defence (defence sufficiency) on the part of all States could be of great importance in promoting trust, security and the adoption of agreements on disarmament and arms limitation or reduction.

III. The declaration on the non-use of force or threat of its use on the part of States can help create an atmosphere of trust based on mutual respect which could contribute to the adoption of agreements on disarmament and arms limitation or reduction.

IV. The adoption of measures designed to eliminate or reduce to an absolute minimum the danger posed to the security of the smallest States by the militarization and enormous military arsenals of some States is one of the questions that must be taken up at the regional and global levels which would create a favourable atmosphere for the conclusion of agreements on disarmament and arms limitation or reduction.

Arms limitation and disarmament agreements

(a) The first paragraph should read as follows:

"Regional measures for disarmament and arms limitation or reduction which are initiated by States in the region, and in which they participate, may lead to the relaxation of tension in the region concerned and should have a positive bearing on other regions as well as on global efforts for peace, security and disarmament".

(b) The following should be added at the end of the third paragraph:

"These measures should not hamper the transfer of technologies associated with these spheres which have civilian applications, provided that guarantees are given that they are to be used exclusively for civilian purposes".

(c) In the first line of the fourth paragraph, the words "and global" should be added after "regional".

(d) In the second line of the sixth paragraph, the words "in the region" should be replaced by "not only at the regional but also at the global level".

Zones of peace and zones free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction

(a) Mention should be made in the first paragraph to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

This comment also applies to the second and third paragraphs.

(b) The second paragraph should include the idea that States which are outside the zone, but have a presence or interests in it, must make a commitment to respect the agreements that are adopted by the States within that zone.

Non-proliferation regime

(a) The following paragraph should be added:

"In order to ensure that the non-proliferation regime becomes universal, it is essential that it should be non-discriminatory, i.e. that all States parties assume the same obligations and have the same rights.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 42 (A/46/42), para. 41.